(d) Yes, Sir.

(f) some of the important steps undertaken/being undertaken for upgradation of airport infrastructure in the country are: (i) Construction of new airports at Hyderabad and Bangalore in Public Private Partnership; (ii) Modernisation of Delhi and Mumbai airports through Joint Venture route; (iii) Modernisation of Kolkata and Chennai airports by AAI; (iv) Modernisation of 35 non-metro airports by AAI; (v) 'In principle' approvals have been accorded for new airports at Navi Mumbai in Maharashtra, Mopa in Goa, and Kannur in Kerala and a passenger & cargo hub at Nagpur; and (vi) Setting up of three Greenfield airports and upgradation of existing airports in North Eastern States.

License to airports

487. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that of the eighty-two operational airports in the country, only nineteen have licences granted by the Ministry, despite the fact that as per International Civil Aviation Organization rules, airports are required to have licence to handle international flights;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the list of nineteen licensed airports includes all the privatised airports and many of the airports under the control of Airports Authority of India (AAI); and

(c) if so, the steps Government proposes to take to accelerate the process of granting licence to all operational airports in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) The licensing of airports has been taken up by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation on priority in a phased manner. Till now, licenses under 'Public Use' category have been issued for 20 airports, including 13 international airports managed by the Airports Authority of India (AAI), while 19 airports have been licensed under 'Private Use' category.

Cramming of airspace

488. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the exponential growth of airlines and passengers has crammed the airspace over Indian cities and situation below at airports is making even driving crew cars and taxing unsafe;

(b) whether it is also a fact that airports built decades ago, designed to handle a lower traffic of flights daily are now witnessing movement of much larger number of aircrafts and support vehicles of airlines; and

(c) if so, the steps Government proposes to take to ensure safe airside for passengers and crew?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The unprecendented growth in air traffic in past 3 years has raised

challenges for airport infrastructure and airspace management, specially at busy airport such as New Delhi and Mumbai;

(c) The infrastructure at airports is being upgraded by strengthening and extending the runways, apron for more parking of aircraft, parallel taxi track and rapid exit taxi tracks to improve upon runway occupancy. The capacities of Terminal Buildings are also being expanded by construction of new Terminal Buildings with modular design and modifying/ expanding existing terminals.

Dedicated Airports Express Rail Link in Hyderabad

489. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the largest status of the proposal of Andhra Pradesh Government to develop a Dedicated Airport Express Rail Link (DAERL) from existing Begumpet Airport to the new Rajeev Gandhi International Airport; and

(b) the time likely to be taken to accord approval for leasing land at the existing Begumpet Airport for DAERL on long term basis and for implementing the DAERL project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) A proposal has been received from Andhra Pradesh Government and it is under examination.

Fuel surcharge imposed by private airlines

490. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the public sector oil companies have reduced the price of Air Tubine Fuel (ATF) by 4 per cent in the last week of December, 2007;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the fuel surcharge on tickets has not been reduced by the airlines;

(c) whether private airlines are cheating the passengers by overcharging from passengers and the 4 per cent reduction on ATF is going into their kitty; and

(d) if so, whether Government would issue strict instructions to private players to reduce fuel surcharge on tickets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Price of ATF was reduced by about 4% in the month of Dec., 2007.

(b) to (d) The Government is not regulating fares of the Airlines. Domestic airlines are free to charge air fares as per the market forces.

Air services from Visakhapatnam during night

491. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has expedited the process for operating the air services from the Visakhapatnam Airport during night time;

(b) whether his Ministry is facing any shortage of skilled and technical manpower to operate the services during night time from the existing airport at Visakhapatnam;

(c) the reasons in delay for not operating the services during the night time; and